

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided the present application. Claims 1, 5-13 and 17-20 are now present in the application. The specification and claims 1, 5-10, 12, 13 and 17-20 have been amended. Claims 2-4 and 14-16 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 9, 13 and 20 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that dependent claims 4-9 and 16-20 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants greatly appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

By the present amendment, independent claims 1 and 13 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claims 4 and 16 and their intervening claims 2, 3, 14 and 15, respectively, as discussed hereinbelow.

In addition, claims 9 and 20 have been rewritten in independent form to incorporate the subject matter of their base claims 1 and 13 and their intervening claims 2 and 14, respectively. Accordingly, it is believed that claims 9 and 20 are in condition for allowance.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. §119

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

Information Disclosure Citation

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on July 23, 2004 and February 24, 2006, and for providing Applicants with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form filed therewith.

Applicants have also submitted the references supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on September 7, 2006 for consideration by the Examiner. However, Applicants have not received an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form indicating that the references have been considered by the Examiner. The Examiner is courteously requested to provide Applicants with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form filed therewith with the next official communication.

Drawings

Applicants thank the Examiner for accepting the formal drawings of the instant application.

Specification Objections

The specification including the title, abstract and the disclosure has been objected to due to the presence of minor informalities. In view of the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this objection has been addressed. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this objection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Claims 2-12 have been objected to due to the presence of minor informalities. In view of the foregoing amendments, in which the Examiner's helpful suggestions have been followed, it is respectfully submitted that this objection has been addressed. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this objection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In view of the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection has been addressed. Accordingly, all pending claims are now definite and clear. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are therefore respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nam, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2004/0237246. Claims 1-3 and 10-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Edstrom, U.S. Patent No. 2,227,302. Claims 1 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Kajihara, U.S. Patent No. 6,079,077. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejections are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

As mentioned, independent claims 1 and 13 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claims 4 and 16 and their intervening claims 2, 3, 14 and 15, respectively, which were indicated by the Examiner as including allowable subject matter. Accordingly, it is believed that amended independent claims 1 and 13 are in condition for allowance.

In addition, claims 10-12 depend, either directly or indirectly, from amended independent claim 1 and are therefore allowable based on their respective dependence from amended independent claim 1, which is believed to be allowable.

In view of the above amendments to the claims and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 10-13 clearly define the present invention over the references relied on by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are respectfully requested.

Additional Cited References

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but rather to merely show the state of the art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

CONCLUSION

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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